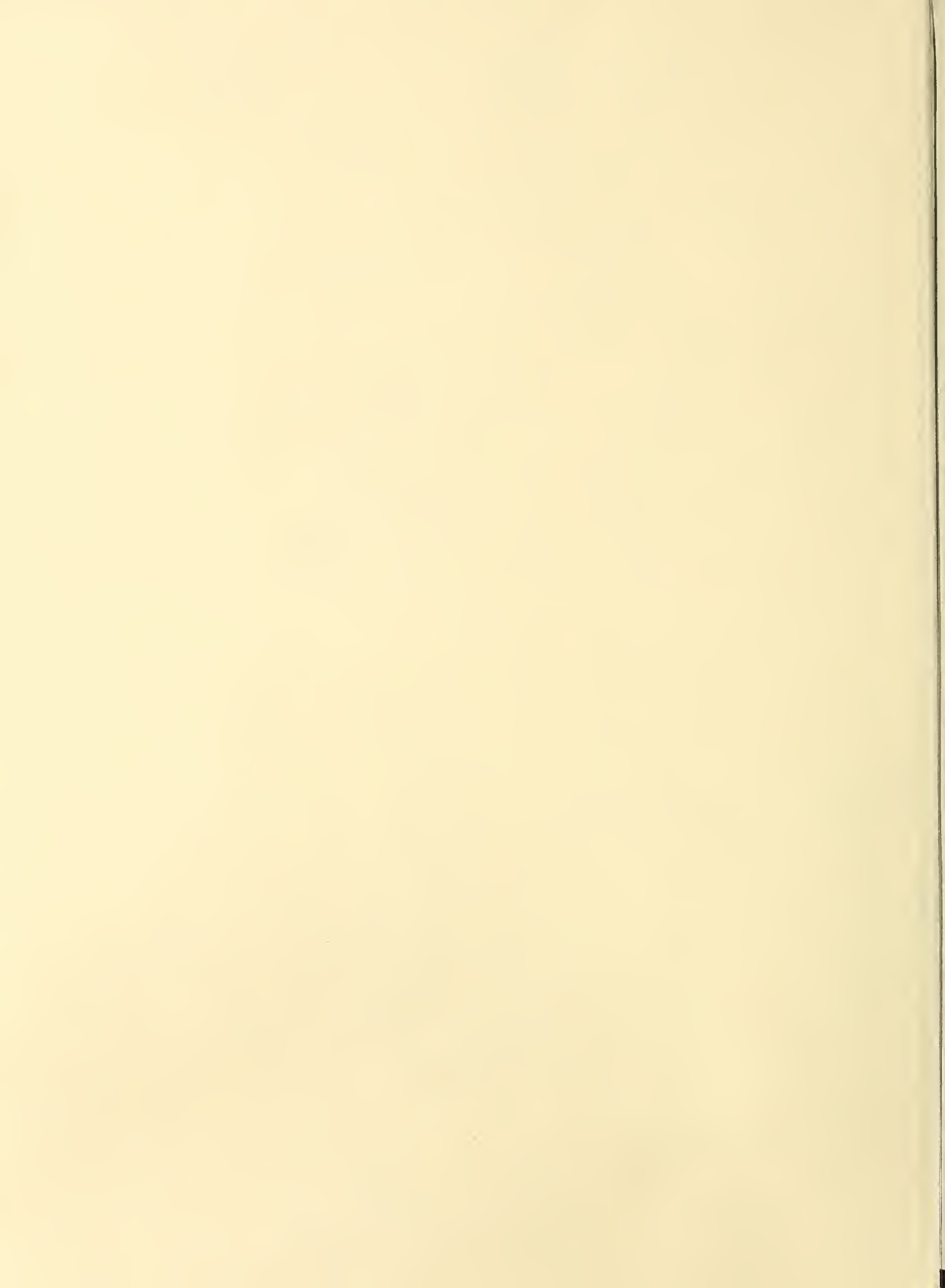


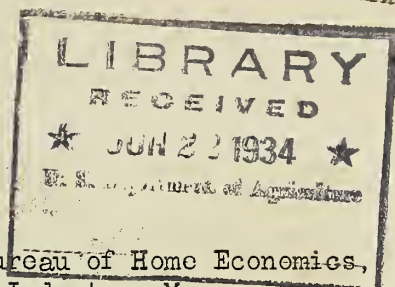
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HOUSEHOLD - GARDEN CALENDAR

The Strawberry Festival



A radio discussion by Miss Ruth Van Deman of the Bureau of Home Economics, W. R. Beattie and George M. Darrow of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Morse Salisbury and others, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, June 5, 1934.

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MR. SALISBURY: On several occasions, Mr. W. R. Beattie in his Garden Calendar talks, has told us about the merits of certain new varieties of strawberries which have been originated and introduced by Department workers during the past four or five years. Today, we are to have a little more definite proof of the merits of these new varieties, for Mr. Beattie has brought along today Mr. George M. Darrow, the man who is largely responsible for the success of the small-fruit improvement work of the Department especially the production of new varieties. We have here on a table numerous baskets of the ripe berries of the new varieties ready to sample. Miss Ruth Van Deman, the Household Calendar lady, has arranged for the shortcake -- but more of that later. Now we'll call upon the general manager of the strawberry part of our festival, Mr. Beattie.

MR. BEATTIE: All right, Morse. You know, folks, back of each and every one of these wonderful new strawberries, there's a long story of patient toil and effort to combine the good qualities of two or more existing varieties in one superior new sort. First, I am going to ask Mr. Darrow to tell you how he came to start this work of originating new varieties of berries.

MR. DARROW: Well, Beattie, you may recall that several years ago the manufacturers of preserves insisted that we produce varieties of strawberries having the proper tart flavor, firmness and color required for making the best preserves. At present, practically all of the commercial preserves are made from frozen berries. The ripe berries are carefully stemmed, washed, sugar is added, then they are packed in barrels or tin containers. They are immediately placed in cold storage and kept frozen until needed. The freezing retains the original flavor; in fact improves the flavor somewhat. From this you will understand that a variety of strawberry for preserves must meet the test of freezing.

The canners and ice cream manufacturers as well as the makers of preserves wanted much better berries for their use. They needed varieties that would hold their flavor and color when processed. The standard market varieties didn't have the firmness or the color to stand up under freezing and canning.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I tried some of your frozen strawberries once, and I'd say your new varieties stand the taste test anyway.

MR. DARROW: Yes, some of our dreams have been realized, and I am convinced that we have not reached our limit. We have turned over to the growers seven new varieties, and we have nearly a thousand more under observation. Among them we may have several that are better adapted for special purposes than any we have brought out yet. Four years ago, we introduced the Blakemore for general market and preserving use. It is now the leading sort in many sections

(over)

from Maryland to Georgia and west to southern California. Last week, in one section, it was bringing \$2.00 more a crate than other sorts, because of its fine appearance, and superior shipping qualities. It is the finest preserving variety yet introduced. We've found that the Blakemore grows best in thin rows. If the plants are allowed to mat together too thickly, the berries will be small toward the end of the picking season. Here is the Blakemore in this basket. The berries are of good size, smooth, blunt-pointed, bright red color, the flesh is firm, and the flavor is quite tart. Here, Salisbury, try one of these perfectly ripe ones.

MR. SALISBURY: Always willing to oblige, Darrow. Martyr to science, that's me. - - - (After a pause). That berry certainly has a fine flavor. It's firm and quite tart. You say that's the Blakemore?

MR. DARROW: Yes, that's its name -- Blakemore --. Its color and firmness make it a good market berry, and then the added tart flavor makes it suitable for preserving.

MR. BEATTIE: Darrow, I understand that the Blakemore is replacing most other market varieties in the many important shipping sections of the South, except in Florida and the lower Gulf Coast region.

MR. DARROW: Yes, 6,000 to 7,000 acres of this sort were harvested this year. A word of caution to you listeners. Please remember that the Blakemore is adapted for the region from Maryland southward to central Georgia and westward to southern California and not for the northeastern sections.

Now, here is a box of the Dorsett which we introduced just a year ago as a high quality variety for the Eastern sections from Virginia to New Jersey and the regions westward to eastern Kansas. The Dorsett has the highest flavor of any variety grown in the northeastern region, and it is resistant to leaf diseases which is an important point in its favor. This year it brought the highest price on the Washington market, selling for twice the price of the ordinary run of berries. The Dorsett produces plenty of plants and needs a wide matted row for best results. Beattie you had some fine Dorsett in your garden this year.

MR. BEATTIE: Yes, and I still have some good ones. The Dorsett was several days earlier than Howard 17 or Premier in my garden this year, even though it was a trifle later than Howard 17 on the eastern shore of Maryland. Here, you folks, try these Dorsett berries and see how good they really are. (Pause) ..... How do you like it, Miss Van Deman?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Just about everything a strawberry should be. Red, and juicy, and just sweet enough and tart enough. What's that next variety, Mr. Darrow?

MR. DARROW: Oh, that's the Fairfax. We also introduced it last year at the same time as the Dorsett. It's one of the sweetest and finest sorts for growing in the same regions as the Dorsett. The Fairfax is very productive, very fine in appearance, and has the same rare, rich flavor as the Dorsett, but not quite so strong. (Pause) ..... How do you all like it?



CHORUS: I think it's fine. Delicious flavor. Splendid.

MR. DARROW: I take it the jury votes for the Fairfax, too. Now, here's one more variety that I want all of you to try. It is called the Bellmar. It was originated at our Station at Bell, Maryland. So we combined the name Bell with the first three letters of Maryland, and called it Bellmar. It is a firm, large, very attractive market variety, but a little more subject to the leaf-scorch disease than the Blakemore. The Bellmar has good flavor under some of the worst weather conditions, and incidentally it is one of the hardiest for Minnesota, and was the most productive variety in the Connecticut tests.

VOICE OF THE U. S. NEWS: I've been twice or three times around the table sampling the various kinds and I believe that the Fairfax is my choice, but they are all very good.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Darrow, let's get this straight. You've said that the Blakemore is the best preserving berry. But which of these new varieties do you consider the most perfect table berry?

MR. DARROW: Well, I believe the Dorsett is the finest table berry, but if I were eating the berries right in the patch I'd take the Fairfax. I want to tell you a little story. A few days ago Dr. Mangess who is at the head of our fruit work was looking over the varieties and sampling them. He said that he had found a variety that he considered better than the Dorsett but that there was no name on the stake and he didn't know what kind it was. I looked it up on my chart and found that it, too, was Dorsett. That was one on my chief, all right.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, I've been sampling them while you folks were talking, and I scarcely know which one I like best. I'm still troubled by the deformity my Dad used to tell me about -- eyes bigger than stomach. But the taste buds aren't quite paralyzed yet, and they tell me I like the Fairfax best.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I still think the Dorsett is the best. By the way, going professional now, I suppose you folks know that strawberries are a good source of vitamin C, the vitamin that helps to keep the gums and teeth in good condition.

MR. SALISBURY: What is that vitamin in strawberries?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Vitamin C.

MR. SALISBURY: The same as the one in cod-liver oil?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No.

MR. SALISBURY: Unfortunate, very unfortunate. You can't substitute strawberries for cod-liver oil?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No. You can't get away from the cod-liver oil that way.

MR. SALISBURY: Oh, well .....

MR. BEATTIE: Mr. Darrow, which of these new varieties is the best for making strawberry ice cream?

MR. DARROW: Well, they are all being used, but I suppose the Blakemore is being employed most extensively for freezing, because of its firm texture. It is almost ideal for ice cream making. We have not tested the Dorsett sufficiently.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, right now, while I still have some capacity left I propose that we should perform that scientific test to discover which makes the best strawberry shortcake.

Are you ready with the shortcake, Miss Van Deman?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Of course, apparently you were looking so hard at the strawberries, that you didn't even notice the box I brought in. See it over there. It's full of nice fresh shortcakes, one for everybody. Mrs. Fanny Yeatman made them this morning, and she is right here ready to serve them up.

U. S. NEWS MAN: Oh, I hope it's nice soft yellow sponge cake. That's my idea of a perfect strawberry shortcake.

MR. SALISBURY: Sponge cake, nothing. To me, it seems that one of the surest evidences of decay in the national character is this recent fad for using sponge cake as a basis for strawberry shortcake -- so-called. The first time I realized that there was evil in the world was once when I went away from home during strawberry time and was served what purported to be shortcake. It actually was sponge cake with strawberries on it. The people insisted that it was shortcake. At that moment the first suspicion that there was error and meanness crept into my childish mind.

And now, I'm afraid that things have come to a pass where right in the sacred precincts of the Department of Agriculture, Mrs. Yeatman here, and Miss Van Deman can make up shortcake out of sponge cake -- and they actually can keep on smiling, seem calm and collected. But their laughter is hollow, and the smile is forced. I know that they feel, deep down, they've made a mockery of the best American shortcake tradition by even making part of the cakes out of this new fangled -- I can hardly utter the word -- sponge cake. Imagine those noble berries bedded down on such alien pastry! I hope you brought some honest-to goodness shortcake.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Certainly I did. But you're never going to catch me on the horns of this strawberry shortcake dilemma. Some like it with sponge cake, and some like it with a biscuit foundation, crisp and brown and buttery. So here you are, we brought both kinds. You can take your choice and argue it out. As for me, nine-tenths of a strawberry shortcake are the strawberries any way.

MR. SALISBURY: I see you're<sup>a</sup>/diplomat, Miss Van Deman.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, I've learned it's no use to take sides on some of these food arguments. But before we begin the battle of the forks and spoons, let me give you this sidelight on the history of strawberries, which I came across the other day. Roger Williams who helped settle Rhode Island back in the 1600's was evidently a strawberry enthusiast also. He wrote in his journal: "This berry is the wonder of all the fruits growing naturally in these parts. It is of itself excellent; so that one of the chiefest doctors of England was wont to say, that God could have made, but God never did make, a better berry." These are my sentiments exactly. Now, gentlemen, I give you the strawberry shortcakes.